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Addendum

Discussion paper contributed by major groups: women**

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** Prepared by the Network for Women in Natural Resource Management.

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Summary

As women's participation in decision-making within forestry organizations at the national and international levels remains very low, the present note offers action to address this constraint, based on examples from developing countries. It focuses on social and cultural issues to offer perspectives on the root causes of poverty and forestry problems, highlighting ways in which women's active engagement in forestry programmes and organizations can significantly impact poverty alleviation and result in more effective and equitable forestry organizations. A case study from Nepal provides a concrete example of an approach that succeeded in achieving forest regeneration, women's empowerment and poverty alleviation through a process of gender mainstreaming aimed at organizational change within the agencies responsible for natural resource management, hence moving women's empowerment from a field level to central level concern.

Identified in the present discussion paper are three major gaps that persist in relation to women and forests: policies, roles of professional women, and organizational barriers that obstruct women from positions of leadership.

Proposals for action by both governments and major groups focus on capacity-building and support for a network of committed women professionals, who can mentor, build capacities and leadership capabilities, share successful approaches and methods, and form a body of a size and strength large enough to develop organizations at the international, regional, national, and local levels that promote gender equality and environmental sustainability.

Contents

		Paragraphs	*Page*
I.	Introduction	1–4	3
II.	Obstacles and achievements	5–22	3
	A. Sociocultural obstacles	6–16	4
	B. Achievements	17–21	6
	C. Development of a global network	22	7
III.	Emerging issues	23–33	8
	A. Policies on gender in relation to forestry and sustainable development	25–29	8
	B. Role of professional women in implementing policy objectives for women's empowerment and gender equality for sustainable development	30–32	9
	C. Organizational barriers that obstruct women from realizing their potential to be agents of change	33	10
IV.	Addressing the gaps: proposals for action for Governments and major groups	34–41	10
	A. Policy level	34–36	10
	B. Support for action	37	11
	C. Change at the institutional level	38–41	11

I. Introduction

1. Given the comprehensive nature of the paper submitted by women at the third session of the United Nations Forum on Forests on women's contributions to various aspects of forests (E/CN.18/2003/2/Add.5), these will not be reiterated here. Based on the needs expressed by women involved in the forestry sector, the present discussion paper focuses on the social and cultural aspects of forestry that hinder the implementation of policy recommendations such as those listed in the recommendations to the United Nations Forum on Forests, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and other forest policy players and formulated by the conventions on sustainable development, poverty eradication and gender equality. One such recommendation of the discussion paper contributed by the women's major group in 2003 is for "action ... to enhance women's full participation in the management of forests from the stage of conceptualizing policy through to detailed planning and design of institutional mechanisms to implementation, monitoring and evaluation" (ibid., para. 15 (c)).

2. That document also recommended that donors and bilateral and multilateral organizations provide support in six major areas, including:

(a) Training for women in forestry and natural resource management fields;

(b) Projects that empower women to manage resources;

(c) Research for gender-disaggregated data;

(d) Communications, networking and disseminating information gained from on-the-ground experience and research;

(e) International policy activities that explicitly consider women's participation and the impact of projects on women;

(f) Facilitation of women's participation in international conferences and debates on forestry.

3. As women's participation in decision-making within forestry organizations at the national and international levels remains very low, the present paper offers actions to address this constraint, based on examples from developing countries. It focuses on social and cultural issues to offer perspectives on the root causes of poverty and forestry problems, highlighting ways in which women's active engagement in forestry programmes and organizations can significantly impact poverty alleviation and result in more effective and equitable forestry organizations. A first step to achieving this goal is to change the organizational norms and cultures within the forestry profession itself.

4. In addition to this organizational change, indicators reflecting women's needs and achievements in relation to the implementation of international agreements on forests and the Millennium Development Goals are required. This is not provided here, but requires further work.

II. Obstacles and achievements

5. Recent discussions with women foresters and forest managers/users during the World Forestry Congress in Quebec in September 2003 and with women

professionals in forest-related international organizations produced a consensus about persistent gaps in policies, awareness and actions related to gender and forests. An example was found in the organization of the World Forestry Congress itself: the major groups of youth, indigenous people, labour and business were provided by the organizers with formal recognition and time to make presentations in the opening meeting. Women, however, were not formally recognized as a group and there were few papers or side events that dealt with gender issues over the course of five days of meetings attended by over 4,000 people from 140 countries. This is not uncommon and is reflective of the status of women's issues at both the national and international levels.

A. Sociocultural obstacles

6. Social and cultural factors limit the degree to which forest departments around the world are motivated and capable of initiating and implementing gender equality agendas. A lack of gender consciousness, cultural traditions, gender biases and institutional barriers and norms that relate to this are the cause of the slow pace of gender integration in the forestry sector.

Gender consciousness

7. There is a general lack of awareness among both women and men about how gender issues affect environmental issues. The Women's Environment and Development Organization states that this has been a major obstacle to women's environmental advocacy since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. While many policy recommendations link gender to the environment, development agencies and government departments have tended to overlook the roles of women in forestry and the effects of this on poverty alleviation, and environmental sustainability.

Cultural traditions

8. In many cultures and countries, traditional gender roles confine women to the domestic sphere or to "feminine" jobs, making their participation in public processes related to forestry problematic. The multiple roles and responsibilities of women and a lack of family support have been cited as reasons why more women do not enter the profession. As a male-dominated profession, forestry is imbued with symbols and practices that are masculine in nature, and may not be welcoming to women.

Gender biases

9. Even though women's participation is theoretically accepted in multi-stakeholder forums, gender bias plays an important role in the decision-making processes. Attitudinal barriers are deeply rooted, resulting in a systematic exclusion of women and their issues from the policy agenda. Instead of being recognized as key agents of food security and environmental management, cultural influences in almost all the countries of the world produce stereotypical ideals of women as dependants, supplementary caretakers and service providers, thus concealing the extent of their contributions to forestry.

Institutional norms and barriers

10. Forestry as a profession demonstrates the "extreme cases of inadequate female representation" (E/CN.18/2003/2/Add.5, para. 15 (d)), and this has implications for the institutions responsible for forest development. Men usually dominate decision-making forums but do not raise gender issues and implement gender policies, resulting in only the token participation of women. Women and men often have different perspectives, priorities and values related to both conservation and social equity, yet women's absence from decision-making roles deprives an organization and its constituents from incorporating an enhanced effectiveness that could come from tapping into these abilities. The result is the alienation not only of women foresters, but also women community members who find it difficult to engage with only male forestry professionals.

11. Organizational change is required within forestry agencies for equity goals to be realized, yet very few projects and programmes include, as an objective, a change in the implementing organizations themselves in order to successfully carry out gender equity and equality initiatives.

12. Strategies and mechanisms for organizational change will not only have to address policy changes, but assess whether the dominant norms, values and attitudes of its members is consistent with principles of gender equality. Resistance to change is embedded in deeply held assumptions, values and norms of the organizational culture and attitudes of individual members that are surprisingly similar around the world. Forestry departments around the world are influenced by global paradigms in which professionalism, hierarchy, and masculinity are valued. Even where there is an awareness of gender and development, men's power and masculine values permeate most aspects of the organization, frequently in ways that are taken for granted. These values determine the organizational cultures that are created, maintained and replicated by staff within forestry departments.

13. There are many cultural obstacles that impede women foresters in their workplace. Women in India, Nepal, Pakistan and Bhutan have identified these as: biases against women in the workplace, unequal opportunities for training, low levels of decision-making power and authority, lack of confidence and an underestimation of their capabilities by employers as factors that constrained their contributions as professionals. An example of this is also found in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, where female staff of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry reportedly work "below their qualifications" as typists, or to perform office services for their male colleagues (Schenk-Sandbergen and Chosiulamany-Khamphoui, 1995).

14. Forestry is a field of expertise that is, according to the profession's norms, to be practised by those who are inducted into the profession by obtaining a forestry degree from a specialized school, and as such is exclusive. Forestry training in many parts of the world resembles that of military training, as foresters are taught to protect resources from people. As such, it is imbued with masculinity; traditionally, the symbolic ideal forester is a well-built male who can handle a gun as well as a chainsaw and tackle wild animals, malaria, and the populace alike. Relatively few women enter this domain, and most of those who do quickly learn to underplay and mask their femininity in an attempt to gain the respect of their male peers.

Transfer of technology

15. More recent approaches that integrate social science methods in forestry projects have softened these masculine orientations, yet the "transfer of technology" paradigm that dominates the field of forestry defines the professional views of many foresters who tend to believe that poverty alleviation and enhanced livelihoods will result when community members implement the appropriate technologies. Problems of natural resource management are often best addressed through social interventions such as the elicitation of the participation of all forest users, including women, rather than through purely technical fixes.

16. Without an emphasis on the social aspects of forest management, gender gaps are frequently observed in forest-related programmes. These are manifest, most visibly, in a lack of women staff, lack of activities benefiting women, low budgets for women-related activities, and unbalanced decision-making both within forest departments and non-governmental organizations as well as within the communities where activities are undertaken.

B. Achievements

17. As information about country experiences related to women/gender and forestry is in the process of being collected, there are as yet few examples to draw from. An in-depth case study in Nepal is shared here; other country experiences can be added as they become available.

Gender mainstreaming in Nepal

18. Experiences from Nepal demonstrate a successful strategy for changing the attitudes of forestry professionals while simultaneously creating conditions under which poor rural women can gain respect and fulfil forest-related needs. A forestry project there has provided an approach to achieve forest regeneration, women's empowerment and poverty alleviation through a process of gender mainstreaming that is aimed at organizational change within the agencies responsible for natural resource management, hence moving women's empowerment from a field-level to central-level concern. Key to this approach was a team of committed and skilled women and men who acted as change agents within their communities and agencies, based on an assumption that women were critical to the project's success.

19. The project contributed to meaningful gains in the quantity and quality of livestock that farmers now own; reduced pressure on national forests for fodder and fuel wood; increased household food security; diversified and increased sources of income; and decreased farmers' indebtedness to the local moneylenders (Ohler 2000). A key aspect of the success in the Hills Leasehold Forestry and Forage Development project in Nepal was the leadership provided by two male project leaders from the Department of Forests and FAO. These managers had the vision to hire a team of three women and grant them the autonomy that allowed them to develop an innovative strategy. Their goal was to address the organizational culture of the implementing agencies in order to make their male counterparts more aware of and responsive to rural women's realities, and to bring about a change in their attitudes towards women.

20. Through the persistence of the all-women Gender Team, and their sustained support and firm belief in the abilities of the rural women, continual gender and leadership training was provided to a cadre of local female Group Promoters recruited from around the country. The Group Promoters were inspired to build a sense of solidarity, to encourage and depend on one another for support — a behaviour modelled by the Gender Team themselves. Thus evolved a very high degree of the Group Promoters' trust in the Gender Team, as they gained a sense that "we had a mission, we were willing to take risks, even to lose our jobs". The Group Promoters felt proud to be associated with such a group of women, and they themselves gained in status through such linkages to high-level project staff and government officials (Gurung and Lama, 2003).

21. The key elements and best practices of this project are summarized below:

- Conceptual leadership and support of project co-managers and senior officials to the Gender Team
- Synergies amongst four collaborating agencies
- A special Gender Fund
- The Gender Team — their spirit, experience and commitment
- Autonomy of the Gender Team that allowed for innovation
- High-quality, simple and relevant training curricula
- Long-term persistent support and follow-up activities for Group Promoters
- Development of gender focal persons who perceived positive gains from their participation
- Interdependent nature of the work of the line agency staff and the Group Promoters
- Consistently good performance by the Group Promoters
- The perception that women are key to the project's success and not just an add-on.

C. Development of a global network

22. The global network, the Network for Women in Natural Resource Management, was initiated at the World Forestry Congress as a side event attended by about 50 women and men interested in addressing the constraints of women professionals and community members described above. This network offers women foresters training in gender mainstreaming, leadership, organizational development and advocacy, and support and assistance. Members will collect, analyse and share existing policies and practices, test and replicate good practices through pilot initiatives funded with small grants to members, and conduct and use research for advocacy, linking to policy-influencing bodies in the United Nations, the North and developing countries. Through this worldwide network of women professionals, the Network expects to create a global voice to advance gender equality within forestry policies, programmes and organizations.

III. Emerging issues

23. Based on the Nepal experience, it is clear that there is a need for gender structures to be built into forestry institutions, to establish gender leadership within forestry departments themselves. Given the cultural constraints to gender equality posed by local contexts and the masculine orientation of forestry organizations, support is required to build a sustained base.

24. Case studies such as the one from Nepal and discussions with women through various consultations and correspondence have identified three major gaps that persist in relation to women and forests. These relate to:

(a) Policies regarding gender within the forestry and natural resource management sectors;

(b) Roles of professional women in implementing policy objectives for rural women's empowerment and gender equality within these sectors (bridging policy and community levels);

(c) Organizational barriers that obstruct women from realizing positions of leadership and influence and taking on such roles.

A. Policies on gender in relation to forestry and sustainable development

25. The author of a commentary on the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Duddy, 2002) notes that "ten years ago almost every page of Agenda 21 included a statement on the role of women in sustainable development. It is indicative of the power shift that ten years later there are fewer references to women and gender equality in the ... 76-page Johannesburg Draft. Most of these references refer to the role of women as contributors and as resources for sustainable development, not to the importance of changing gender and power relations that impact development".

26. At a preparatory meeting for the Summit in Bali, the women's major group at the multi-stakeholder dialogue session issued a strong statement on governance and capacity-building and called for urgent action in the three key areas of global governance, governance and gender, and transparency and accountability. Their demands emphasized that poverty eradication, women's human rights, and gender justice are inextricably linked, but noted that gender commitments were not being automatically reflected in institutional governance. They called for arrangements that recognize and reward women's contribution as key players in environmental protection management and conservation.

27. The Millennium Development Goals, with their high level of international consensus, offer possibilities to link forest issues, gender and poverty in an integrated manner. An example would be to reduce poverty by improving rural women's access to forests. Yet the use of the Millennium Development Goals in this way requires an understanding of women's roles and needs in order to be effective in the war on poverty.

28. All Governments are required to report on national progress towards Millennium Development Goals, but gender has been marginalized in many reports

and restricted to goals related to gender equality and health. The Women's Environment and Development Organization has monitored progress on the Millennium Development Goals and states in their report (2003) that "all country reports submitted in 2003 failed to mention gender in relation to goal #7 on environmental sustainability. Few Governments set actions for target #9 to integrate principles of sustainable development and reverse the loss of environmental resources".

29. The meetings in Johannesburg resulted in a newly recognized need for, and, appreciation of civil society organizations that can advocate for change and have a voice within the United Nations system. The Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development Initiative, developed through a participatory process with stakeholders, identified common interests and established a working relationship between FAO, Governments and groups that make up civil society. As one of the nine major groups identified as "disadvantaged", women as "agents of change" in rural development are now on the agenda of international organizations and donors.

B. Role of professional women in implementing policy objectives for women's empowerment and gender equality for sustainable development

30. Women forestry professionals from international organizations, Governments, universities and non-governmental organizations have expressed their needs for skills and support to enable them to more effectively assist rural women while affecting transformation in their own organizations to build organizational environments that are consistent with this goal.

31. These women have very few, if any, role models whom they could emulate to construct linkages to rural women farmers for the empowerment of all women. These constraints, common to women professionals of many countries engaged in forestry for sustainable development programmes, limit the degree of gender sensitivity in community-level projects. These gender gaps are manifest, most visibly, in a paucity of women staff associated with the programmes, a lack of activities of interest to rural women, low budgets, and gender-unbalanced decision-making both within the department as well as within the communities where activities are undertaken. At an individual level, these factors plus a lack of exposure and opportunities, and isolation resulting from professional women's marginalized status within forest departments results in women's frustration and inability to perform services for rural women.

32. Positive impacts resulting from women's leadership within communities, implementing organizations and educational institutions have not been documented or widely disseminated, thus denying women important role models for change. In addition, research is needed to understand the organizational constraints to such leadership, to understand how enabling environments for women can be developed within these male-dominated institutions.

C. Organizational barriers that obstruct women from realizing their potential to be agents of change

33. Despite the rhetorical support for gender equity in the funding organizations and many government and non-governmental organizations policies, many progressive policies are not able to materialize. International development agencies that have progressive gender policies at headquarters are not always able to follow them in country offices, leaving such policies to be dealt with in an ad hoc manner (Mumtaz, 1993). This is largely due to the lack of gender-sensitive organizational structures and cultures that can support such goals. Community-oriented and social forestry programmes provide a more legitimate space for gender issues in relation to access and control over forest resources, and yet even in these programmes, gender issues are frequently neglected and women are given only token representation.

IV. Addressing the gaps: proposals for action for Governments and major groups

A. Policy level*

34. **Issues related to gender equity and women's access to forest resources should be included as components of national Millennium Development Goal implementation plans. National reporting can also include progress on targets set in other international agreements and conventions, including the Beijing Platform for Action and the 2002 Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and build on legally binding human rights mechanisms such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.**

35. **To implement Millennium Development Goals, the United Nations has created task forces that provide expertise and background papers for each of the goals. These task forces should include analyses of how women's empowerment and gender equality is central to poverty eradication and environmental sustainability. Targets and indicators for measuring progress must be expanded. Governments, in consultation with women's organizations, should develop gender-focused targets and indicators that are tailored to the national context.**

36. **National strategies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals will require substantial investments of resources by donor countries. The World Bank and IMF work with 70 of the poorest countries to develop Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers as a way of setting priorities for projects and programmes, yet many of these lack a gender focus. Progress in meeting these goals should be monitored and reported and should monitor the degree to which gender and women's access to resources is being incorporated in the plans. This can be achieved through the following five action steps:**

(a) **Collecting and analysing sex-disaggregated data can help Governments to understand how women and men are excluded from use of**

* This section draws on WEDO's 2003 report.

certain resources, and can better target strategies for improving women's access to resources;

(b) Conducting gender analysis to understand the differing needs and roles of men and women is necessary for effective policy-making and service delivery. This exposes the disparities that lead to social, economic and political inequality and can reveal key connections, such as the importance of women's participation in decision-making for poverty eradication;

(c) Using gender-mainstreaming strategies to integrate different needs of women and men in policy-making. Women must be enabled to affect governance and decision-making;

(d) Ensuring gender balanced decision-making to include women's perspectives and concerns in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of policy decisions and outcomes.

B. Support for action

37. These actions can be supported by women's organizations and gender advisers who can assist Governments with the following:

(a) Gender review process: before finalization, country reports should go through a gender review process. This would enable women's organizations to actively engage in the monitoring process and to point out indicators that recognize the needs of women and poor communities;

(b) National toolkits on gender indicators: in consultation with women's organizations and gender advisers, Governments should compile a list of national indicators related to gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as specific indicators to measure women's access to and control of forest resources. This would enable the identification of factors most critical to achieving Millennium Development Goals in each country;

(c) Gender budget initiatives: Governments should analyse the differential impacts of specific policies and budget allocations on women and men to improve accountability and targeting of public services. This has been found to be especially useful in incorporating gender into sectors not normally associated with women, such as forestry and natural resource management.

C. Change at the institutional level

38. Forestry institutions themselves must change to become more gender-sensitive in order to support initiatives for gender equity and women's access to forest resources. Included in this may be a role for a donor agency. Donors that support policies and programmes for the empowerment of women need to fund approaches that provide, on a short-term basis, special project funds for catalytic support so that government agencies that have to date neglected gender issues can initiate approaches to institutionalize gender-mainstreaming agendas. However, the question of sustainability needs to be addressed, as the Governments of many developing countries see gender initiatives as belonging to the donors. Ways must be found for such agencies to develop a sense of

ownership over such initiatives, possibly through projects that demonstrate positive impacts through women's active participation.

39. **Networks engaged in organizational change for gender equality within the forestry sector can conduct organizational analyses of forest departments and research and training institutes to understand the structural and cultural factors that constrain gender equity. Once identified, an approach for change can be prepared and supported through these networks and through the community of women professionals.**

40. **The goal of improving the situation of gender within such organizations and their programmes may best be addressed by concerned individuals who are committed to moving policy to action. A community of women professionals, who understand the obstacles faced by most women working in the forest sector, can mentor, build capacities and leadership capabilities, share successful approaches and methods, and form a body of a large enough size and strength to build organizations at the international, regional, national, and local levels that promote gender equality and environmental sustainability.**

41. **Key to the process of institutionalizing gender within forestry organizations is building the capacities of these women to act as facilitators (whether or not they have formal authority as gender focal points). Such support can be provided through:**

- **Motivation and encouragement through mentorship**
- **Leadership training**
- **Gender-mainstreaming skills**
- **Confidence building**
- **Opportunities to learn of others' experiences and best practices**
- **Access to tools and other resources**
- **Grants for research or activities with rural women.**

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